

UCLA Faculty Association

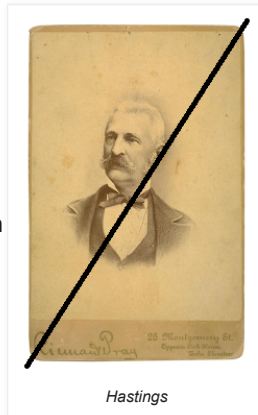
News and opinion from Dan Mitchell since 2009

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Saturday, February 7, 2026

No Hastings - Part 2

Blog readers may recall that the name of the Hastings College of the Law in San Francisco - which is administered by the UC Regents - was changed to the UC School of Law.* This change occurred during a period when various names were being changed due to the histories of whoever was involved. In this case, Serranus Hastings had given money to establish the school back in the 19th century and there was litigation filed by his descendents objecting to the name change. Calls to change the name go back at least to 2021.



The case wended its way through the courts and last week, the California Supreme Court declined to hear an appeal from lower court decisions that had approved the change in name.

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Source: <https://newsroom.courts.ca.gov/news/california-supreme-court-lets-decision-stand-scrubbing-hastings-name-uc-law-school-0>.

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*<https://uclafacultyassociation.blogspot.com/2024/02/no-hastings.html> for Part 1. Type "Hastings" into the search engine for this blog for various earlier postings about this issue.

Posted by California Policy Issues at 3:30 AM No comments: 

Labels: [UC-Hastings](#)

Straws in the Wind - Part 246

The Council of UC Faculty Associations

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Topics



From [Inside Higher Ed](#): In 2024, the chair of the statewide University of North Carolina Faculty Assembly and the UNC state system embarked on a fraught mission at a fraught time: writing “a consensus definition” of academic freedom for the entire university system. Academic freedom scholars have themselves long disagreed over what academic freedom does and doesn’t protect... Now... the UNC Board of Governors is set to vote on a lengthy definition. It promises many of the protections contained in other descriptions of academic freedom, but it’s drawn opposition from the state’s American Association of University Professors arm over both the express limits it places on that freedom and what the AAUP calls vague language that could be used to further restrict classroom teaching.

“Academic freedom is not absolute,” the proposed new definition says. “Academic freedom is the foundational principle that protects the rights of all faculty to engage in teaching, research/creative activities, service, and scholarly inquiry without undue influence,” the definition says. It goes on to say academic freedom includes the right to teach and research “controversial or unpopular ideas related to the discipline or subject matter.” It also includes parameters saying what academic freedom isn’t.

...But there isn’t full consensus. The state chapter of the national AAUP, which wrote the landmark 1940 Statement of Principles on Academic Freedom and Tenure, is objecting... “The impulse to fence in academic freedom should be disregarded and eschewed,” lawyers for the AAUP wrote this week to system officials. “The convenience of defining an academic freedom ‘box’ is antithetical to case law, our constitutions, and historical approaches.”

...Under the proposed definition, the “parameters of academic freedom” won’t include teaching “clearly unrelated to the course description,” “using university resources for political or ideological advocacy in violation of university policy,” or “refusing to comply with institutional policies or accreditation standards.” ...Further, it says, “Management is responsible for resource allocation and program viability,” including approving and eliminating programs and setting “broad curricular frameworks.” And the section on student academic freedom says, among other things, “Students are free to take reasoned exception to concepts and theories presented in their classes ... even as they continue to be responsible for learning assigned course content.” ...

Full story at <https://www.insidehighered.com/news/faculty-issues/academic-freedom/2026/01/29/unc-plans-define-what-academic-freedom-and-isnt>.

Posted by California Policy Issues at [3:20 AM](#) No comments:

Labels: [politics](#), [U of North Carolina](#)

The 405 approaches

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Construction of the 405 approaches UCLA in 1957.

Posted by California Policy Issues at [3:10 AM](#) No comments: 

Labels: [transportation](#), [UCLA](#)

Will Harvard Continue to Lead the Charge? - Part 117



From the [NY Times](#): Harvard undergraduates would compete for a limited number of A grades in their courses under a faculty committee proposal released Friday meant to tame grade inflation at the Ivy League school. During the last school year, about two-thirds of all undergraduate letter grades were A's. Under the new proposal, grades of A would be limited to 20 percent of grades in a course, with an allowance of four additional A's. So, for example, a professor teaching a class of 100 students would be able to award up to 24 grades of A under the proposal, which could come to a vote by faculty this spring. There would be no limits on A-minus and lower grades.

Grades of A at Harvard are supposed to be reserved for work of "extraordinary distinction," but they have exploded to become the majority of grades awarded. In developing the proposal, the committee decided to propose returning the A to a lofty designation, as it had originally been intended, said Alisha Holland, a professor in the Department of Government at Harvard and a member of the committee that issued the proposal. "We thought, 'What if we try to give meaning to the shared standards we already have around grading?'" ...

Harvard's grade inflation report in October floated the notion of recognizing the very best students by allowing a limited number of A+'s, a grade not used at Harvard, but that idea is not in the new proposal...

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Full story at <https://www.nytimes.com/2026/02/06/us/harvard-grade-inflation.html>.

Posted by California Policy Issues at [3:05 AM](#) No comments: 

Labels: [Harvard](#)

Friday, February 6, 2026

Reminder

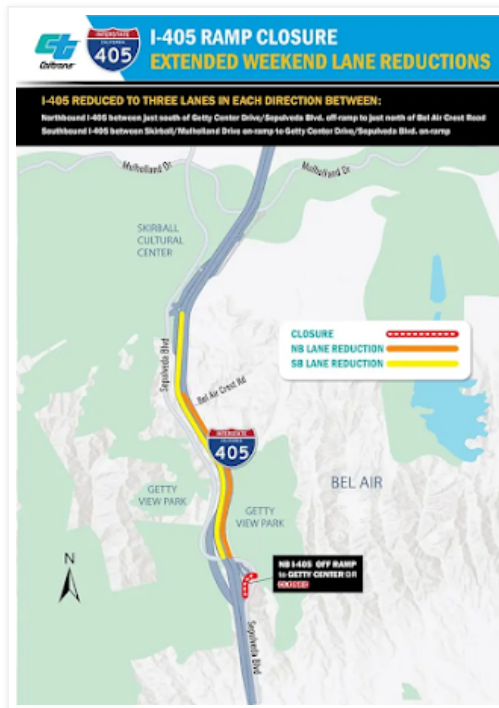
From Santa Monica Patch:
Traffic is expected to be impacted on the 405 Freeway and nearby roads this weekend when construction will shut down several lanes on both sides of the interstate near the Sepulveda Pass.

And another weekend-long closure is planned for March.

The freeway will be reduced to three lanes in each direction in the area of the Getty Center from 10 p.m. Friday, Feb. 6 through 5 a.m. Monday, Feb. 9. Additionally, one off-ramp will be closed...

Construction has been underway on the 405 Freeway in and near the Sepulveda Pass since June as part of the I-405 Pavement Rehabilitation Project, a \$143.7 million project to improve safety and mobility along the freeway and extend the life of its pavement, according to Caltrans...

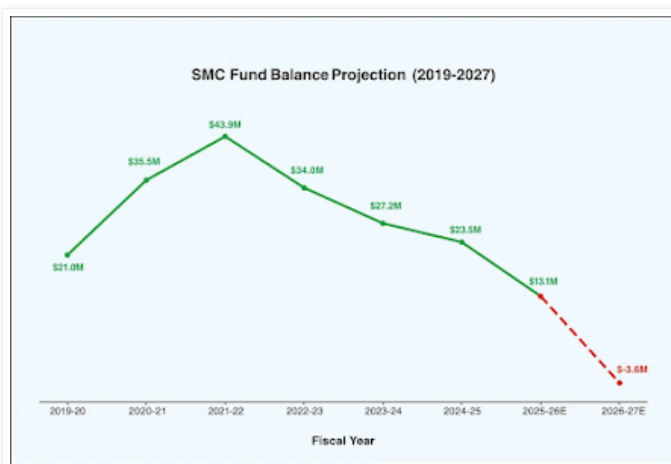
Full story at <https://patch.com/california/los-angeles/weekend-long-closure-405-freeway-begins-friday>.



Posted by California Policy Issues at [8:44 AM](#) No comments: 

Labels: [traffic](#), [transportation](#), [UCLA](#)

Falling Feeder



Santa Monica College is the top community college feeder to transfer students to UCLA.

However, it, like other community colleges is having fiscal problems due to falling enrollment and other factors. The impact could be felt at UCLA due to legislative mandates concerning transfers.

From the [Santa Monica Daily Press](#): *Santa Monica College will eliminate approximately 70 positions as the institution confronts a projected \$16.7 million deficit that could deplete its financial reserves by the 2026-27 school year, Superintendent/President Kathryn E. Jeffery announced in a letter to the college community. The layoffs, which affect classified staff and management positions, represent the latest effort to address a structural budget deficit that has steadily eroded the college's fund balance from \$43.9 million in 2021-22 to a projected \$13.1 million by the end of the current fiscal year and a loss of \$3 million by next fiscal year...*

The college has already notified affected employees and is working with the California School Employees Association to support those impacted by the reductions. The layoffs come after the college implemented \$8.6 million in budget cuts for the 2025-26 fiscal year, including a 5% reduction in class schedules, attrition-based position eliminations and discretionary budget reductions... The financial crisis stems from multiple factors that have converged over the past several years. The college's enrollment has declined approximately 13% since 2018-19, dropping from 19,501 full-time equivalent students to 17,089 in the current year. More significantly, changes to funding at the state level have been chipping away at SMC's finances for years.

Under the funding formula implemented in 2018-19, California community colleges receive allocations based on three components: base enrollment (70%), supplemental support for low-income students (20%), and student success metrics (10%). When the formula was introduced, 27 districts — including Santa Monica — saw funding decreases and were placed in "hold harmless" status, receiving their previous year's allocation plus cost-of-living adjustments. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the state extended those protections through 2024-25. However, starting in 2025-26, colleges in hold harmless status no longer receive annual cost-of-living increases, effectively freezing their state funding even as expenses continue to rise.

...The college is... pursuing enrollment growth strategies to eventually increase state funding, though such efforts face headwinds from declining high school graduation rates. According to Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education projections, California high school graduates are projected to decline 29% by 2041, with key feeder districts for Santa Monica College seeing even steeper drops in the coming years...

Full story at: <https://www.smdp.com/layoffs-coming-to-santa-monica-college-as-the-school-runs-out-of-money-next-year/>.

Note that similar trends are likely to affect other big feeder community colleges to UCLA such as Pasadena. Santa Monica College has undertaken considerable capital investments over the years. Voters tend to be friendly with regard to approving bonds for educational purposes. But ultimately, the fixed costs of paying off those bonds have to be paid, even if falling enrollment leads to excess capacity. The same trends are affecting K-12 districts.

Posted by California Policy Issues at [3:30 AM](#) No comments: 

Labels: [admissions](#), [community colleges](#), [enrollment](#), [UCLA](#)

Straws in the Wind - Part 245



From [Inside Higher Ed](#): *Beginning next month, a new test will join the SAT and ACT as an admissions option for prospective students applying to the United States' elite service academies: the Classic Learning Test, an up-and-coming exam that focuses on passages from*

the Western canon... For years, it was relatively niche, serving primarily as an academic progress exam for private classical schools, an educational movement that promotes the study of classic Western literature and other liberal arts. Some colleges and universities allowed it as an entrance exam, though many were test optional, meaning a student could submit their CLT score if they felt it bolstered their application... That changed in 2023, when the State University System of Florida's Board of Governors began accepting the CLT—in addition to the better-known SAT and ACT—as an admissions exam for its public universities, which all require test scores for admission, as well as for its flagship Bright Futures scholarship program.

Now, more than two years later, Arkansas and Oklahoma have followed suit, allowing submission of the CLT for admission to their public institutions, and students in Louisiana, Oklahoma and Wyoming can submit CLT scores for state merit scholarships. In addition, the University of North Carolina System recently began accepting CLT scores for students who meet a GPA threshold. The test has also become a darling of the conservative right, whose members argue that it is more rigorous than its competitors and can “restore merit” in higher education...

Full story at <https://www.insidehighered.com/news/admissions/traditional-age/2026/01/29/clt-test-beloved-conservatives-continues-growing>.

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From [Inside Higher Ed](#): A collection of public school districts and university faculty members are challenging Department of Homeland Security policies that allow Immigration and Customs Enforcement officers to conduct detainment activities on or near public education campuses. The complaint, filed Wednesday in the U.S. District Court of Minnesota, comes in the wake of a surge of ICE presence in Minneapolis and Saint Paul and the killing of two American protesters, Alex Pretti and Renee Good. As the threat of immigration enforcement grows, the plaintiffs argue that ICE action at public K-12 schools and on college campuses is not only a violation of the rights of immigrants but also a disruption to the lives of U.S. citizens.

Historically, federal regulations deemed public education institutions, churches and other religiously affiliated spaces as “sensitive locations” and therefore they were off limits to immigration enforcement teams, except in rare pre-approved circumstances. But on Jan. 21, 2025, President Trump revoked that policy, opening the flood gates to increased ICE activity in all spaces...

Full story at <https://www.insidehighered.com/news/quick-takes/2026/02/05/ice-sued-over-policy-allowing-immigration-actions-campus>.

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Labels: [admissions](#), [diversity](#), [Florida State University](#), [politics](#), [U of Arkansas](#), [U of North Carolina](#), [U of Oklahoma](#), [U of Wyoming](#)

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